

*Insert Local Public Health Department Logo*



*(Date)*

Dear Parent,

It has been reported to the Iowa Department of Public Health and the *(Insert Local Public Health Department)* that your child is infected with Shigella.

Shigellosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a group of bacteria called *Shigella*. Shigella germs are present in the stools of infected persons while they have diarrhea and for up to a week or two after the diarrhea has gone away. Shigella is very contagious; exposure to even a tiny amount of contaminated fecal matter—too small to see-- can cause infection. Transmission of Shigella occurs when people put something in their mouths or swallow something that has come into contact with stool of a person infected with Shigella. Many outbreaks are related to childcare/preschool settings and illness commonly spreads from young children to their family members and others in their communities because it is so contagious. Shigella can cause severe illness; over 20% of infected persons are hospitalized.

Children with Shigella infection who attend childcare or preschool are excluded until their diarrhea is gone and have one negative stool culture. If treated with antibiotics, wait at least 48 hours after completion of antibiotics before obtaining the stool specimen. If the first stool specimen is positive, allow at least an additional 24 hours before obtaining the second specimen.

Exclusion is directed in accordance with Iowa Code Chapter 139A.6 Communicable Diseases, which states, "If a person, whether or not a resident, is infected with a communicable disease dangerous to the public health, the local board shall issue orders in regard to the care of the person as necessary to protect the public health." The *(insert Local Public Health Department)* is ordering that your child be excluded until the criteria above have been met.

In addition, Iowa Code Chapter 139A.6 Exposing to Communicable Disease states, "A person who knowingly exposes another to a communicable disease or who knowingly subjects another to a child or other legally incapacitated person who has contracted a communicable disease, with the intent that another person contract the communicable disease, shall be liable for all resulting damages and shall be punished as provided in this chapter."

Iowa Code Chapter 139A.25 Penalties states, "Unless otherwise provided in this chapter, a person who knowingly violates any provision of this chapter, or of the rules of the department or a local board, or any lawful order, written or oral, of the department or board, or of their officers or authorized agents, is guilty of a simple misdemeanor."

Thank you for your cooperation in reducing the risk of transmission to other children attending your child's preschool.

Sincerely,

*(Insert Local Public Health Administrator or Medical Director Signature Block)*

*This letter should only be issued under the direction of a local public health department or the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) which is part of the Iowa Department of Public Health. Individual healthcare providers, school officials, and childcare providers are not authorized to independently issue this letter.*